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Public Information Office: +93 (0)70-234-236 x4037

E-mail: kabulusaidinformation@usaid.gov

http://afghanistan.usaid.gov

# FACT SHEET

## **Veterinary Field Units**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Afghanistan is an agrarian nation, and more than 80 percent of its citizens live in rural areas and depend on livestock (sheep, goats, cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, and chickens) for food and income. Livestock health is essential for the survival of many Afghans but a lack of veterinary care leads to frequent early animal deaths and loss of revenues. To provide affordable, accessible veterinary care, USAID established a network of veterinary field units (VFUs) – private businesses that provide preventive animal health and treatment services to rural communities. Veterinary Field Units are established as part of USAID's Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP), in partnership with the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, Partners in Revitalization and Building, and the Afghanistan Veterinary Association.

The VFUs are staffed by veterinarians, veterinary assistants, and paravets (paravets are the equivalent of community health workers but for animals) who use a community-based approach to provide advice, cure diseases, and administer reliable and quality vaccines and medicines to livestock on a fee-for-service basis. The notion that Afghan farmers can't afford to pay for veterinary services is being replaced by the belief that Afghan farmers can't afford *not* to pay for veterinary services.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- **Veterinary care:** Teach farmers about maintaining the health of their livestock, provide veterinary care for sick and healthy animals, and administer vaccines and medicines for an affordable fee
- **Disease control:** Control outbreaks of major livestock diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease, anthrax, black-quarter, hemorrhagic septicemia, respiratory disease, internal parasites, and mastitis
- **Training:** Provide training to paravets in order to expand mobile livestock health services throughout Afghanistan
- **Business sustainability:** Boost demand for VFU goods and services through public awareness campaigns, build the capacity of the VFUs through business training, and link VFU owners with buyers to expand sales opportunities

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Supported 446 VFUs in 26 provinces across Afghanistan
- Delivered more than 48 million vaccinations and treatments to livestock
- Generated more than \$12.1 million in gross sales of veterinary care and supplies
- Participated in a cashmere value awareness campaign that trained about 400,000 male and female goat herders on the value of cashmere and proper harvesting methods
- Developed four extension packages (small ruminant herd health package, large ruminant herd health package, poultry package, and a health/gender package)
- Trained 825 VFU staff, field monitors, government staff, and partner staff on implementing extension packages in the field
- The VFU staff and field monitors held extension awareness sessions with more than 319,000 farmers and herders